

Common Pitfalls of New Nonsmokers

Impatience

"I want what I want, and I want it right now!"

You want to forget about quitting smoking and get past the rough parts, right now. Impatience is a trap. You can't hurry this process, but you can do things that help. If you find yourself becoming impatient:

- Remind yourself how long you've smoked.
- Remember that your body is healing from cigarettes and that takes time.
- Think about the many benefits of quitting.
- Reward yourself for all your hard work.

Depression

Feeling a little blue is normal during the first few weeks of quitting. Try to distract yourself with some fun activities you really enjoy. If your depression feels too intense, or lasts longer than a few weeks, talk to your doctor. There may be some help available through counseling or medication.

The "Pity Party"

"Why do I have to quit smoking?" or "No one else has it this tough."

A little self-pity is actually comforting, but too much is a shortcut to relapse.

- Limit self-pity to ten minutes a day.
- Remember that quitting is your decision. You want to do this because of your health, family, children, guilt, embarrassment, etc.
- Talk to others who have quit and ask them what made quitting worthwhile.

Overconfidence

"I've got this licked. I don't even want a cigarette. I tried one and it didn't even taste good."

Becoming overconfident is very dangerous. Cigarette smoking is a powerful addiction, and the minute you forget, it will remind you.

- Be humble - you are one cigarette away from smoking again.
- Be grateful for each smoke-free day.

Irritability

It's normal to be cranky right after you quit. But taking out your anger on coworkers, friends, or loved ones can spell trouble. Someone may offer you a cigarette to help you calm down, or you may feel guilty over something you said and want to smoke. If you feel irritable:

- Try to get some extra rest.
- Exercise.
- Remember that this is a withdrawal symptom that will pass in time.

*There is no such thing as
"just one cigarette."*

One is a million.

Oops! I slipped!

Don't slip. If you do, get right back on track as soon as possible. The most important part of a slip is what you do about it. How to handle a slip:

- Quit again immediately
- Get rid of all cigarettes
- Call a friend to help you
- Change your surroundings and leave the situation
- Take a brisk walk
- Read your list of reasons for not smoking

Think!

Ask yourself:

What happened that led to the slip? What was going on? Where was I? What thoughts were going through my head?

Analyze the situation

How did it feel to take those few puffs? _____

Was it what you thought it was going to be? _____

Did it help? _____

Did it make the problem go away? _____

Did you try any other way to help yourself cope? _____

How will you handle this the next time? _____

Don't feel guilty!

People make mistakes.

A slip is a slip, not a total collapse.

Take a slip seriously; learn what you can about how it happened and go forward a little bit wiser.

*Within every problem,
there is a lesson.
Release the problem,
and embrace the lesson.*

12 horizontal purple bars for writing.